

FEBRUARY 1, 2000

REPRESENTATIVE SCHAKOWSKY URGES COLLEAGUES TO SUPPORT A REAL PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS READS ONE OF NUMEROUS LETTERS FROM CONSTITUENTS CALLING ON CONGRESS TO PASS HMO REFORM LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. - On the House floor today, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) urged her colleagues to support real HMO reforms and move quickly to pass real Patients' Bill of Rights. Below is Schakowsky's statement.

"Mr. Speaker, now is the time for a real Patients' Bill of Rights; and today is the day that we should instruct the conferees to move quickly to pass a strong bill."

"I have a letter from constituents. It reads:

"Dear Representative Schakowsky: We beg you to please do everything you possibly can to support a Patients' Bill of Rights for those of us who find ourselves in the merry-go-round of dealing with HMOs and reluctant insurance company benefit providers. It has gotten to the point of being ridiculous when patients are subjected to mental torture by these big companies."

"This certainly cannot be what our Founding Fathers had in mind. Ultimately, we have only one means of relief, the United States Congress. I understand the big providers have lobbyists, with deep pockets, fighting any legislation that would force them to be more fair and of understanding their responsibilities to their customers, but this cannot be allowed to interfere with what we all know to be basically right and wrong. This is what the average American cannot understand. Why cannot Congress just do what is right for the people whose well-being has been entrusted to them?"

"It has been entrusted to us. This is the day that we can act to say move quickly, move now."